



EFF STATEMENT COMMEMORATING AFRICA DAY

Saturday, 25 May 2024.

On this Africa Day, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) stand in solidarity with all Africans across the continent and in the diaspora as we celebrate our shared heritage, unity, and resilience. Africa Day marks not just a remembrance of our rich history, but also a reaffirmation of our commitment to the continued struggle for freedom, equality, and justice.

In 1958, under the revolutionary leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana made history by hosting the first Conference of Independent African States. As the vanguard of independence in sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana spearheaded a united front against the shackles of colonialism. This historic gathering not only fostered cooperation among African nations but also birthed a powerful symbol of liberation: African Freedom Day, celebrated on April 15th.

A few years later, on May 25, 1963, a historic milestone was reached. Representatives from 30 African nations convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to establish the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). These nations, having achieved independence, recognised that unity was the path forward for the African peoples. This pivotal event marked a significant stride towards the collective strength and solidarity of Africa, and African Freedom Day was replaced with Africa Day, and from thereon celebrated on the 25th of May.

A central mission for the OAU was to liberate the remaining territories such as Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). They pledged unwavering support to freedom fighters and restricted colonial powers from accessing military bases. The OAU celebrated a monumental achievement when South Africa, the last bastion of imperialism, was liberated in 1994.

In 2002, the African Union was formed as the OAU's successor, uniting 55 free African states in a mission towards total liberation, self-sufficiency, and economic integration. Africa Day, therefore, commemorates not just the founding of the OAU but also the relentless struggle for African independence and unity. The EFF honours this vision of our forebears who dreamt of a united, peaceful, and prosperous Africa.

Today, the African continent has made significant strides in fostering unity and pursuing common goals. This year alone, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has launched the transformative Desert to Power Initiative. This project aims to energise the Sahel region, one of the least developed and most vulnerable parts of the continent, by turning it into a solar energy hub. By harnessing the region's vast solar potential, this initiative aims to provide electricity to 250 million people by 2030, driving sustainable development and improving the quality of life across the Sahel.

Additionally, in a ground-breaking move, the African Union has taken the lead by rolling out a Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy, making history as the inaugural region to do so. This policy digs deep into the opportunities and dangers of digital access for African children, while also addressing the myriad factors impacting their online safety. This landmark initiative underscores our collective commitment to nurturing and defending the welfare of the African child in today's ever-evolving landscape.

However, it is deeply disheartening to witness signs of regression, especially concerning the rights and well-being of girls and women across the continent. The recent contemplation in The Gambia to reverse the ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) is a stark example of this concerning trend. This ban, hard-won after years of tireless advocacy by countless women activists, represents a significant milestone in safeguarding the dignity and physical integrity of millions of young women. The mere consideration of overturning such a crucial protection is not just regressive, it's barbaric and violent. It undermines the progress made and poses a grave threat to the rights and health of girls and women.

Furthermore, the recent announcement in Niger, northern Nigeria, regarding the intention to marry off young girls orphaned by attacks from kidnapping gangs is deeply troubling. Despite being framed as a charitable gesture, it blatantly violates the rights of children and women. Orphaned children deserve compassion, support, and the opportunity to thrive, not to be subjected to forced marriages, which essentially amounts to human trafficking. These vulnerable girls should be provided with education, proper care, shelter, and the chance for a promising future. Any attempt to exploit their plight in this manner is not only morally reprehensible but also a grave infringement on their fundamental rights.

Thomas Sankara, the African revolutionary, profoundly asserted, "Comrades, there is no true social revolution without the liberation of women. May my eyes never see and my feet never take me to a society where half the people are held in silence." These words resonate powerfully today, reminding us that the true liberation of Africa hinges on the liberation of its women and children. We cannot overlook the fact that the progress towards equality, justice, and freedom in Africa is deeply intertwined with the advancement of women's rights. We must, therefore, remain vigilant and steadfast in safeguarding and advancing the rights and dignity of women and children, for they are integral to the vision of a truly liberated Africa.

As we approach our forthcoming elections on May 29th, the EFF seizes this moment to reaffirm our commitment to pan-Africanism. Our organisation stands firm in its belief in a unified Africa, characterised by unrestricted movement and trade, all under a single currency. We proudly uphold the vision of our predecessors from the OAU, who envisioned an Africa marked by robust regional and continental integration. We remain dedicated to the pursuit of this noble goal, striving to realise a future where Africa stands united and prosperous, for the benefit of all its people.

As we honour our continent during this celebration, let us not forget our brothers and sisters in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who endure immense suffering due to Western-backed wars and genocide aimed at perpetuating imperialist domination of our resources. The relentless commitment of greedy Western powers to sow chaos in these regions is evident, and we must not turn a blind eye to it. We urge the entire continent to unite and stand in solidarity with these nations before it's

too late. It's imperative that we rally together to support our fellow Africans in their struggle against external interference and exploitation, ensuring their sovereignty and the prosperity of our continent as a whole.


ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS


Sixolise Gcilishe (Elections Spokesperson) 081 075 0936


Leigh-Ann Mathys (National Spokesperson) 082 304 7572

 communications@effonline.org

 <http://www.effonline.org>

 @EFFSouthAfrica

 @EFFSouthAfrica

 Economic Freedom Fighters